

March 18, 1999

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, Maryland 20852

5 8 8 4 '99 MAR 24 A10 :39

Re: Docket # 98N-1038, "Irradiation in the Production, Processing, and Handling of Food"

To whom it may concern:

As an active voter, and more importantly, as a concerned citizen and parent of two young children, I am extremely concerned about the possibility that my right to know about food irradiation is under attack. I, as well as the majority of Americans, will not eat irradiated foods. And this is the reason for the proposed changes to the labeling law -- because big business and those who really control this country realize that they cannot push through food irradiation as long as the public is informed. This is a pretty frightening trend and I will be holding my elected representative responsible for their stand on this issue. Let the public know the facts and let the public choose for themselves. **The FDA should retain the current labeling law, the current terminology of "treated with radiation" or "treated by irradiation," and the use of the radura symbol on all irradiated whole foods.**

Regarding the issue of labeling, in its initial petition, the FDA concluded that irradiation was a "material fact" about the processing of a food, and thus should be disclosed. The material fact remains; therefore, labeling should remain. Consumer acceptability, storage qualities and nutrients are affected. Some irradiated foods have different texture and spoilage characteristics than untreated foods. Most fruits and vegetables have nutrient losses that are not obvious or expected by the consumer.

In addition, processing by irradiation causes chemical changes that are not evident and are potentially hazardous. Meat may have a higher level of carcinogenic benzene. All irradiated foods contain unique radiolytic products that have never been tested.

Whether or not the FDA has approved irradiation as safe, it remains a new technology with no long-term human feeding studies. **Consumers certainly have a right to know if this process has been used on their food.**

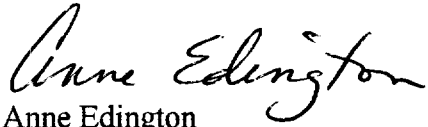
As to the kind of label used, I believe that label should be large enough to be readily visible to the consumer, on the front of the package. The label contains important information regarding the processing of the contents. For displayed whole foods such as produce, a prominent informational display similar to that used for meats should be used (but containing the term "irradiation" and the radura).

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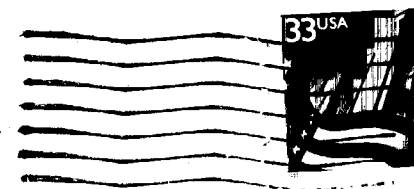
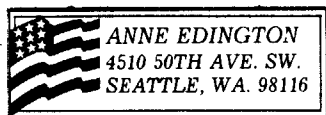
Because of the newness of the technology and the need to assess the public health effects of widespread use of irradiated foods, I believe that **the FDA's labeling requirement should not be permitted to expire.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Edington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Anne" and last name "Edington" clearly distinguishable.

Anne Edington
4510 50th Ave SW
Seattle, WA 98116

cc: Senator Patty Murray
Senator Slade Gorton
Congressman Jim McDermott



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